



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Colonial National
Historical Park

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Colonial National Historical Park News Release

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Native American Utilization of Indigenous Plants *A Presentation by Biologist and Noted Author Helen Hamilton*

Jamestown, Va. – “This is the store” – as the Jamestown colonists surveyed the marshy wilderness they had chosen for a new home, how did they discover shelter, food, clothing, medicines, and tools? Fish and game were plentiful in early America, but the early settlers had little knowledge of how to use other natural resources for their needs.

Join us at the Historic Jamestowne Visitor Center on Sunday, September 18 at 12:30pm to hear Helen Hamilton discuss how local Virginia tribes used trees, shrubs, and herbs to provide shelter, food, household items and medicines. They transferred their knowledge to the colonists, and today we are still using native plants for our food, shelter and medicines. Wood is a source for homes, telephone poles, fences; witch hazel and primrose oil can be found in drug stores. Echinacea and many plants have medicinal qualities, and our food is plant based. We are still learning about powerful chemicals produced by plants for their defense against insects, with the hope of adapting such for our own use.

Helen Hamilton earned baccalaureate and master’s degrees in biology from Ohio University and Indiana University, respectively. She has taught biology, chemistry, and earth science in Virginia’s public schools and was a plant technician for the U.S. National Park Service. A Master Gardener, she was President of the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, 2005–2012, and is Publicity Chair of the Williamsburg Botanical Garden.

Historic Jamestowne is jointly administered by the National Park Service and Preservation Virginia and preserves the original site of the first permanent English settlement in the New World.

For additional information on Colonial National Historical Park, please visit www.nps.gov/colo and participate in the conversation at <https://www.facebook.com/COLOYORK>, <https://www.facebook.com/COLOJAMESTOWNE>, <https://instagram.com/colonialnhp/>

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America’s 413 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.